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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
**INFORMATION REPORT**

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COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT Krakow/Registration and Housing Procedures/Dec 53  
Housing Census

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Administration

2. "The Wydział Gospodarki Mieszkaniowej (Housing Department) of Krakow is subordinate to the Prezydium Miejskiej Rady Narodowej (Presidium of the Municipal National Council - PMRN), which falls under the Administrative Department of the Polish Council of Ministers.
3. "The Housing Department, or Housing Office as it is popularly known, is located in Krakow at Pl Wszystkich Swietych, right near Ul Brzkiej. Its rooms are on the third floor. A doorman at the office entrance hands each applicant a form to fill. He has orders to keep out anyone who cannot prove that he has legitimate business at the office. In 1952 somebody proposed that the Pl Wszystkich Swietych be renamed the Plac Generalissima Stalina (General Stalin Square). The president of the District National Council ignored it.

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Housing Shortage

4. "The housing shortage in Krakow is hopeless. People are living in attics and cellars and sheds. Many families live in just one room. People sleep in railway stations. Others consider themselves lucky to have a bed in a workers' hostel.

Housing Categories

5. "There are two categories of housing:
- (a) Housing owned by private persons -- managed by the owners or superintendents.
  - (b) Housing owned by the State.
6. "Private owners have no legal voice in choosing their tenants. They are allowed only to pay taxes and collect rents. These private rents are prescribed by law: about five groszy (0.05 zl) per square meter plus utilities. The tenant pay this rent to the owner or superintendent directly. 50X1-HUM
7. "Private owners must see that all housing regulations are obeyed and that all repairs are carried out as requested. Theoretically, all repairs are executed by the authorities; in practice the tenants pay for minor repairs. [redacted] the private owner must pay 25% of each month's gross rents into the Housing Fund. The need for repairs must be confirmed by the Komisja Budowlana (Building Commission). They are carried out by the Miejskie Przedsiębiorstwo Remontowe (Municipal Repair Enterprise) and paid by the Housing Fund. Often one waits years for repairs -- for the approval of plans, of funds etc. The repairs are not done well. Confirmation of this is found in the Polish press. The 10 (660) number of 'Szpilki' of 7 Mar 54, page 10, gives a case in the section 'Satyra i Zycie': The housing authorities sent a carpenter to repair the apartment of one Michal Goral at 13.2 ul. Wiosenna, Kolobrzeg. The carpenter fell through a ceiling. The authorities decided no one else should be sent. Editor's comment, 'And rightly so--this is another proof of the State's care for the property of its citizens. Another repair man might have broken the rest of the ceiling'. 50X1-HUM
8. "To a small extent private owners and superintendents used to be able to rent some apartments and rooms to persons they trusted, without registration with the housing authorities. [redacted] special brokers in Krakow handled such rentals. Since the December 1953 housing census /to be described/ [redacted] such illegal practices have been sharply curtailed. 50X1-HUM
9. "Private owners belong to an association called the Zrzeszenie Prywatnych Wlascicieli (Association of Private Owners). They pay monthly dues, [redacted] don't [redacted] get any help from the Association. [redacted] 50X1-HUM
10. "State-owned housing is at the complete disposal of the housing authorities. The rents are paid by postal order or collected by an official at the Housing Office. The new apartments and houses built by the State command high rents. Two rooms and a kitchen cost about 160 zloty per month; the rents are not set for the new state housing. [redacted] The rents in the new state housing also include charges for central heating, chimney sweeping, the apartment tax etc. 50X1-HUM
11. "The new state housing has been erected by the Zaklady Osiedli Robotniczych (Workers' Settlements - ZOR) and by the Miejskie Przedsiębiorstwo Budowlane (Municipal Building Enterprise). The buildings are noted for their poor workmanship. The Polish press devotes considerable space to attacking shoddy building projects. Such an attack, on the new apartment buildings under construction at Grochow II, appeared in the 'Szpilki' issue of 7 March.

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Housing Allocation

12. "By law all living space must be allocated by the Housing Office. The following criteria exist:

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Employed person - 10 square meters living space  
 Unemployed person - 8 square meters living space  
 Child (any age) - 10 square meters living space

(Area of kitchen and utilities not included in the above)

13. "A person who works in Krakow and is registered in Krakow is entitled to file an application for living space with the Housing Office. The application forms are issued by the PRMN Housing Office.

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The applicant must describe all details of his present lodgings and those he would like to have. The application must be endorsed by his employer and by his block superintendent. Applications for lodgings in new buildings are usually submitted to the Housing Office by employers on behalf of employees vital to them. Stakhanovite workers have priorities in all allocations. Apartments in new buildings are allocated by special commissions for various plants. Private persons enclose all sorts of certificates stressing their need for a new apartment. As of Dec 53, their applications were hopeless. The demand for new apartments is terrific, and the building rate is small. The most acute situation exists in Krakow and Warsaw. The applicant then waits and waits. The Housing Office sends a commission to check his present living conditions. These commissions move slowly because they have so many applications to check, and so few apartments to allot. Checks by a commission from the Department of Health are made only at the written request of the Housing Office, never of the applicant. Usually the housing application is denied, because of the 'housing shortage'.

14. [redacted] stamps [redacted] must be put on a housing application. In Krakow the application must be addressed to the PRMN Wydział Gospodarki Komunalnej i Mieszkaniowej, Krakow Pl Wszystkich Swietych.

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15. Priorities exist in the allocation of housing. They go first to families of persons in the Armed Forces, then to Stakhanovite workers and members of the Security Police and the Militia. Then come persons who have friends in the Housing Office and plenty of cash.

16. "Since the expiration of the decree about work in cadres [not explained] [redacted] not sure whether workers with an order to work on a particular job still have priority in getting living quarters. However, since these work orders still exist, e.g. after finishing study on a state scholarship, this priority probably remains on paper. In such cases it is not the employee who applies to the Housing Office but the employer. According to a decree an employer employing a person on the basis of a work order is obliged to provide him with living quarters within six months. Immediately upon employing him he must provide him with temporary lodging.

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17. "One sees no newspaper ads to sell an apartment. There are only ads for exchange -- mostly to exchange large apartments for small apartments (least strangers be allocated rooms in the large one). [redacted] a doctor tore down all the partitions in his apartment to make it one large room. That was to avoid tenants being assigned to the apartment.

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18. "It is possible to register another person in one's own room and to live with that person without the authorities asking questions. No attention is paid to whether the person is of a different sex; the only requirement is to have the person registered. The difficulties begin if one gives a separate

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room to another person, and that person files an application for the room at the Housing Office. The Housing Office is apt to take the room and assign it to someone completely different.

19. "There is no official law against sublets, but they are inadvisable: the Housing Office will find out about a sublet and assign the room either to the tenant, or more often, to a complete stranger. The fact that the apartment owner owns the furniture in the sublet room is not considered; the owner can remove it. Once a room is reported to the Housing Office, it remains at its disposal. If a tenant leaves, another is assigned. The owner cannot reoccupy the room unless he gets an official allocation. People only sublet rooms because they need the money; the average monthly rent for one room in Krakow ranges from 200 to 400 zl. Owners risk a sublet only to persons they trust, who will not report the arrangement to the Housing Office. At the Biurze Ewidencji Ludnosci (Census Bureau) the owner registers the tenant as a relative. If there is an official check he says that the person is sharing the family apartment without occupying a separate room.

20. "Sometimes the Housing Office orders two strangers, occupying separate rooms in an apartment, to double up to vacate an extra room for official allocation.

21. [redacted] to throw a person out of one's apartment, [redacted] can be done easily in practice. The person is simply accused of having forced his way in, occupying the apartment illegally. Forcible occupation of apartments, either just finished or still under construction, were daily occurrences at Nowa Huta. The lock was forced, the apartment was taken, and only then did the occupants report to the local militia and Housing Office to settle the matter. In many cases such persons were left in possession of the apartments, since the Housing Office could not get any satisfaction from the courts. The persons were punished for forcible entry, but they could not be evicted if they had no other place to go. If they had previously had even a small room, they were evicted to their former residence. But if they had occupied shacks marked for demolition, nothing could be done. People act like animals over housing. [redacted] tenants moving in an apartment, whose occupant has died, without waiting for the body to be removed.

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22. [redacted] A substantial number of peasants and persons from other cities are coming to Krakow, and they find jobs and lodgings. There seems to be priority in housing for Krakow residents. [redacted] however, [redacted] no work was being provided for those coming from the West -- from Breslau, Stettin and other places. [redacted]

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23. "Superintendents lock apartment house gates at 10 PM, sometimes later. The tenants have keys. The superintendents keep keys in their office.

24. "To illustrate the procedures for obtaining permanent housing [redacted] the case of one Wladyslaw Bogucki, a mason resident in Krakow. Because he is a skilled worker, he is often sent away on long assignments.

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(a) "Bogucki got his first apartment through pull in 1949. His wife used to work as a cleaning woman in the District Office of the League of Soldiers' Friends, on ul Wielopole in Krakow. The chairman of that office was also chairman of the Przewodniczacy Woj Rady Narodowej (Presidium of the District National Council - PWRN). His name was (fnu) Waligora. The wife went to him and explained how she and her husband had to live in one room with three other families. Waligora promised her help. Within a month Bogucki received an official allocation of another room. This unusual luck was due to endorsement by a high official and the fact that in 1949 such matters moved quickly when handled as personal favors. At that time there were still quite a few apartments available in Krakow that had been vacated by Jews emigrating to Israel.

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- (b) "Mme Bogucki died suddenly in 1951, while her husband was employed in Wroclaw. He came back at once, attended the funeral and within a week received an official notice to vacate his lodgings. No protests availed. Other persons who were waiting anxiously for the vacated living space willingly witnessed that Bogucki was seldom in Krakow. The apartment was taken from him and assigned to the family of a militiaman -- militiamen have a priority everywhere.
- (c) "Bogucki lodged an official complaint with the Wojewodzkiej Komisji Lokalowej (District Housing Commission). While he resisted leaving his room, his furniture was put out in the hall, and the case was closed. Bogucki stored the furniture, paid storage and then started sleeping at the Central Railway Station in Krakow.

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Bogucki was arrested at the station one night when the militia was making a routine check. When he was requested to show his railway ticket and could produce none and started to curse the whole housing situation, the militia put him in jail. There, because he was a valuable skilled worker, he dared to speak out. He told how he had been deprived of his lodgings and, to continue his work in Krakow, had found it necessary to sleep in the station. He could not afford a hotel, and hotel stays are limited to one week. He could not sleep outside because it was too cold. The militia answered that it is forbidden to sleep in the railway station and that the militia was not responsible for the affairs of the Housing Office. Nevertheless, it released him the next day.

- (d) "Bogucki reported back to work and asked immediate leave to find himself lodgings. Because he was refused the leave, he gave two weeks' notice. He left and applied immediately for a job at the Zjednoczoni Przemysłowcy Budowy Nowej Huty (Central Industrial Office at Nowa Huta). He was hired at once and assigned a bed in a workers' hostel.
- (e) "Bogucki was summoned to court because he had left his previous job without permission. But his new and powerful employers, the ZPB Nowa Huta, issued him a certificate stating that he was a good conscientious worker who had left his former job only because he had no place to live. The court dismissed the case. Bogucki still had to pay the Housing Office the cost of evicting him from his former lodging and the cost of storing his furniture.
- (f) "Bogucki finally managed to sublease a room at ul Smolenska 18 at the high rent of 200 zl per month. As a skilled mason he could swing this because he was earning about 1500 zl per month. The apartment owner had pull at the Housing Office, that was why nobody interfered when he sublet a room. The owner of the apartment was to be transferred to Zawiercie. He advised Bogucki to make a formal application in January 1952 for the room he was occupying; otherwise he would lose it again. Again the owner's pull was used. For a fee of 3000 zl -- all Bogucki's savings -- he managed to get the Housing Office to approve Bogucki's occupancy. The Housing Office did not make much trouble because: Bogucki was a skilled worker employed at Nowa Huta; the room was too small for a family; and Bogucki had been evicted unfairly in 1951. But the 3000 zl was what really made the Housing Office act. When the official allocation came through, Bogucki refused to pay his excessive rent of 200 zl. He paid only the official price of about 1.50 zl plus about 30 zl for all other charges. Fights ensued with the owner but because of the bribe, no official claims were lodged against him. The first owner had moved from Krakow, and the successor had no claims on Bogucki.
- (g) "Bogucki remarried in summer 1952. His second wife had three children from her previous marriage. She was living in one room with a kitchen on ul Gromadzkiej in Plaszow. Bogucki decided it would be best to swap the two separate rooms -- his and hers -- in separate localities for one two-room apartment with kitchen. He advertised the proposed swap in a Krakow paper. Meanwhile he was summoned to the Housing Office. The present owner of his room, a security agent, had advised a friend to make a formal application for Bogucki's room because Bogucki had remarried and

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could live with his wife; Bogucki was actually visiting his wife only once a week because commuting from Plaszow to Nowa Huta was too difficult. Bogucki was forced to vacate his room. The Housing Office recalled its formal allocation of Jan 52. Bogucki filed formal claims and appeals, but nothing availed. He could afford no more bribes, and he had never learned the name of the person in the Housing Office with whom the former owner had used pull. He had to move in with his wife in Plaszow.

#### Housing Registration

25. "It is the duty of every person, citizen and alien, to register permanent and temporary addresses. His landlord or administrator is responsible to see that he does. To obtain a work order in an employment office, it is necessary to produce a registration card or service card, or something to prove previous employment. The address registration cards serve more to identify a person than to establish his place of residence.
26. "A person registers his place of residence by filling out a registration card in duplicate. In order to register a permanent or temporary address he must show the house landlord or administrator the identity card or previous registration card issued not earlier than 1951. He must also produce these documents to the local office of the Biurze Evidencji Ludnosci. The card has questions on personal data, place of former residence and place of work. The person must sign. The card does not have official space for the landlord's signature, but eventually that is requested. That is because there have been cases of persons registered at an address who have never lived there.
27. "The registration card for an alien is filled out in one copy and is pink. It is the same size as the one for Polish citizens.
28. "The registration is then entered in the house book kept by the landlord or administrator and in the large book kept in the district PRMN office to record the people in that district. The house registration book has numbered pages sealed at the end and signed by the Biurze Evidencji Ludnosci of the Citizens' Militia, which now controls all matters pertaining to population movement. There is a note indicating how many pages are in the book. The registration books are like school notebooks 'with holes in them and with a string going through them'. [redacted] it would be impossible to destroy a page because it would be noticed immediately. It should be possible, however, to replace an old sheet with a new one, particularly if one replaced the two middle sheets. One could punch holes, cut them, slide the sheets in and glue the cuts. String will cover the cuts, and only a detailed inspection would catch the change. The other sheets would be harder to replace.
29. "All matters relating to population movement are now controlled by the Census offices of the Citizens' Militia. [redacted] documents on population movement have been transferred to those offices from the PRMN authorities. [redacted]
30. "Persons arriving in Krakow for a short visit do not have to register [redacted]
31. [redacted] not [redacted] too difficult to hide in a big city. One should not show oneself too long in one place, and one should avoid superintendents. People who come to Krakow just for a few days do not need any papers since they do not have to register their place of residence. If such persons avoid meeting the authorities, they can do so easily for a time. In a small town, where one has no friends, it would be much more difficult to hide.

#### Dec 53 Housing Census

32. "The Housing Office does not enjoy a reputation of efficiency, but conditions improve yearly. In Dec 53 an overall housing census was made in Krakow. [redacted] such a census was also made in other Polish cities [redacted] The census embraced all non-industrial buildings.

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33. "The census was taken by Block Committees and by various divisions of the PRMN. The forms were completed in duplicate; one copy was left with the house superintendent or owner; the original was returned to the PRMN. The copy left with the house owner was numbered and bore an official seal stating that the original was in the possession of the authorities. The form asked for each house or apartment:

Complete list of inhabitants  
 Their places of employment  
 Date they moved in  
 Number of rooms allotted each inhabitant  
 Amount of rent paid by each tenant  
 Plan of the building

34. "It appears certain that this census will enable the Housing Office to discover all persons who are occupying apartments or houses illegally, i.e. without a formal allocation. All citizens of Krakow who have moved their place of residence [ ] have had to have an official allocation of living quarters. Citizens living in the same residence occupied before the cut-off date received the housing allocation automatically. The census will also enable the Housing Office to allocate housing to new applicants more efficiently. [ ]

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[ ] Each person had to sign his name, and the form had to be confirmed [ ] by the signature of the Block Administrator.

35. "Previously the Housing Office had no detailed list of all available living space in Krakow. It assembled its data piecemeal, when citizens applied for permission to rent a room or apartment. On such occasions the apartment owner or building superintendent had to appear at the Housing Office. He had to report the size of his premises, the persons living there and their personal data. His report was signed by him, the superintendent and the Block Administrator. From such individual reports the Housing Office got a spotted picture of available living space and of buildings which could take more people. When a vacancy arose, it was assigned to the applicant with the most pressing needs.

36. "The Communist Party and the Trade unions exercise most influence over the allocation of living space. Rarely, if a person reported a vacancy to the Housing Office, was he allocated that space. In no other field has bribery been more widespread than in housing. But, in fairness, it should be noted that many former housing officials are serving prison terms for all the favors they granted to friends and friends of friends.

37. "The present employees of the Housing Office in Krakow are recruited from among the ranks of trusted Party members. Intelligent, educated persons are used only for subordinate duties. That is why it is of utmost importance to have Party backing when applying for living space. [ ] it is not permissible to give any papers to anybody asking the Housing Office for allocation of quarters to a specific individual, [ ] the practice of asking for favors by phone or personal contact is still widespread. [ ]

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38. "The Trade Unions no longer interfere in housing matters. The Skrzynka Interwencyjna Polskiego Radia (Polish Radio Complaint Box) has stopped talking about housing problems; it would have to devote its whole program to the topic. The Biurze Listow i Zazalen przy Radzie Panstwa (Bureau of Claims and Letters of the State Council) shows no interest in housing problems.

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#### Block Committees

39. "All the adult inhabitants of a given block of residences elect a Block Committee once a year. Service on such committees is not paid. The elections are 'secret', but there is no choice among the candidates; they

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are either Party members or at least 'socially active'. The committee elects its chairman, who is normally a Party man. He receives the directives from the authorities for the administration of the block. A Block Committee holds meetings about once a month. It handles tenants' disputes, issues certificates etc.

40. "Under no circumstances should one try to bribe a block superintendent, in an effort to hide some person or thing from the authorities. But one should be on good terms with him. He can be invited for meals. He can be bought drinks under various pretexts. It is good to grumble about hard times, to mention making a bit of money by trading old US goods. By making such remarks the person buying the block superintendent a drink justifies his sources of income. People are eager to make extra money when a small matter is involved but reluctant to take risks when politics are at stake. Even if the block superintendent is fairly intelligent, it is not safe to go to him openly with a problem.
41. "A friendly Trade Union man may help get a free vacation for another trade unionist who is not working. He is doing something relatively within his power and should not charge too much. It is good to travel with a trade unionist and to cover his expenses without being extravagant. Some trade union vacations can be spent in frontier areas, but it would be unwise to tell even one's closest friend that one was taking him on a holiday just to get into the frontier area.

#### Hotels

42. "Most hotels are run by Przedsiębiorstwo Hoteli Miejskich (Municipal Hotel Enterprise); others are run by the Orbis chain. [redacted] the four leading hotels in Krakow: Polonia, Francuski, Grand Hotel and the Polera. They are all of the First Category. There is a rather elegant Orbis hotel opposite the station in Katowice (Stalinograd).
43. "A doorman or hall porter registers a new hotel guest. The next day a new hotel guest must report to the Biurowo Ewidencji Ludności. Foreigners who arrive with their passports are treated differently, and [redacted] they are reported immediately by phone. [redacted] no one is permitted to stay in a hotel longer than six days, unless he has an official documentary authorization. A person sent on an official trip from his place of work has a much easier time getting a room and can stay for the period for which his 'delegation' is valid. [redacted] for such persons coming from Warsaw reservations are made over the phone and confirmed in writing.
44. "A doorman in a decent hotel earns about 800 zł per month and alternates between day and night shifts. [redacted] at night no one is allowed to enter hotels. There is no doubt that US agents serve as hotel employees.

#### Utilities

45. "Water bills are paid through the mail by check to the Wodociągów Miejskich (Municipal Waterworks). The bill is paid by the administrator or landlord. The cost is divided among the tenants. There is a drive to save water, but not to the same extent as the drive to save electricity. No quotas are set on water consumption.
46. "Electricity bills are paid by each individual to a collector from Zakłady Energetyczne Okręgu Krakowskiego (Electrical Enterprise of the District of Krakow). The collectors wear no special uniform. Since summer 1953 a large number of women have been used. The bills are collected monthly. The collector cannot check the exact amount on the meter if the person is out. In such cases he prepares bills due for using a minimum amount of electricity. A fee is charged for the electric meter, even if no electricity has been used. The basic meter fee is about 1.60 zł. [redacted]

[redacted] If a collector cannot find his customer at home for several months running, the

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customer must himself record the amount of electricity used and report to the Municipal Power Station to have his bill made out.

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If a customer is unable to pay when the collector arrives, he has three months to pay at the nearest power station. After three days high interest rates are charged.

47. "The consumption of electricity is rationed. [ ] the quota for a one-room apartment is 20 KW per month. An additional 10 KW per month is allocated where there are children under three years, where people have no cooking stoves and where the apartments are particularly dark. The quota for larger apartments is based on the number of persons in each family. There is also an additional allocation of power for a communal kitchen used by several families. 50X1-HUM

48. "In 1952 it was forbidden to use electric heaters or irons after dark. Notice of these regulations were posted everywhere, including the windows of street-cars. Penalties included a cut-off of power for a month.

In 1953 a regulation was introduced whereby any person who exceeds his power quota must pay four times the normal rate per kilowatt. 50X1-HUM

49. "During the winter of 1952-53 electric power was cut once or twice a week in each part of Kraków; e.g. on Monday in Grzegorzki, on Tuesday in Pradnik, on Wednesday in mid-town, on Thursday in Podgorze, on Friday in Zwierzyniec. The power cut was made for several hours, mostly from 5 PM to 10 PM. There was no resumption of this practice in autumn 1953. [ ] the power was cut off to facilitate repairs. 50X1-HUM

50. "The Municipal Power Station is located at Dajwórze, close to the Third Bridge over the Vistula.

51. "Gas bills are paid through the mail by checks. [ ] The Gazownia Miejska (Municipal Gas Works) are located close to the Power Station. 50X1-HUM

52. "Garbage is collected by the Zakład Oczyszczania Miasta (Municipal Sanitation Enterprise), which also sprinkles the city with fresh water during the summer and clears the snow in winter. [ ] the garbage is 50X1-HUM

[ ] put out in tin buckets that fit the openings of the garbage trucks. The garbage men wear regular workers' overalls. The trucks collect ashes in winter. 50X1-HUM

53. "Chimney sweeps. Until 1952 there were private chimney sweeps who sent private bills and had their own workers. A collective cooperative of chimney sweeps has since been established. They send quarterly bills to the apartment owners or administrators, who in turn charge their tenants proportionately. If there has been a chimney fire, a sweep must be called in to state whether the fire was caused by a defective chimney. The cooperative charges about two zł per quarter for cleaning one chimney without partitions. 50X1-HUM

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55. "The housing authorities do not care whether the children have enough space or whether the teachers have suitable quarters. In a vacated apartment they see only a place to allocate to a waiting applicant, possibly for an appropriate fee paid discreetly to the official handling the case. [redacted] the refusal was deliberate, to prevent the Caritas from enlarging a kindergarten. Everything possible is done to make it difficult for the last Catholic organization.

Currency Deals

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56. "In Krakow it is possible to sell foreign currency, e g dollars, but it is a risky business, punishable by five years in prison. People do it to raise money, but only among relatives and trusted friends. The situation today is nothing comparable to 1948 when, on the market place in Sukiennice, peddlers of gold and currency accosted people. [redacted]

[redacted] But if one has no friends, people do not even want to discuss currency transactions.

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